



HOMELAND SECURITY COMMITTEE

Statement of Chairman Michael McCaul (R-TX) Homeland Security Committee

Border and Maritime Security Subcommittee Hearing

"Hidden in Plain Sight: Understanding Federal Efforts to Stop Human Trafficking"
September 26, 2018

Remarks as Prepared

Human trafficking is a despicable multi-billion dollar industry. It enslaves an estimated 25 million people worldwide, including more than 300,000 people in my home state of Texas - 80,000 of whom are minors.

Many of these victims are sexually exploited or forced into slave labor. To some Americans, trafficking may seem like an industry that only exists in poverty-stricken dictatorships or other poor parts of the world. Sadly, that is not the case.

Trafficking is an epidemic and it grows by the day. The Polaris Project reports that 1 in 20 men in the US have purchased sex online.

Traffickers are targeting our schools and preying on our kids through social media and apps on their phones. This evil industry is a global enterprise and we must do more to fight it.

I believe, like every issue, it starts with awareness. As a father of five, I continue to be personally struck by the horrifying stories of trafficking victims.

Last month I visited *Hope Rising*, a rehabilitation program in Texas that matches trafficking victims with a foster family while they complete recovery therapy. It was a reminder that we need a proactive, not a reactive approach to end this kind of exploitation.

That is why I created the Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force when I was Deputy Attorney General for criminal justice in Texas under then state Attorney General, John Cornyn. This led to the prosecution of hundreds of online child predators.

I have also worked closely with the National Center for Missing & Exploited Children (NCMEC), which serves as the central source in the United States for information of child victims depicted in sexually exploitative images and videos.

And earlier this year, I stood in the Oval Office and watched President Trump sign the Blue Campaign Authorization Act into law.

This was bipartisan legislation I introduced that provides resources to DHS to help deter, detect, and mitigate instances of human trafficking around the United States.

It also protects victims and helps raise public awareness of human trafficking threats throughout our communities.

While I am proud of what we have accomplished, there is more work to be done. And I am eager to continue this fight with anyone who wants to stop human trafficking.

Today's hearing will give us a chance to discuss innovative ways to continue our efforts.

I'd like to thank the witnesses for being here today. Your hard work and expertise will help us put the trafficking industry out of business once and for all.

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